



Facing the Challenges of Housing

Cassandra van Nostrand and Evelyn: Story page 2

Vendors pay 50 cents per paper

City Groups that provide Meals

1. Bissell Centre

10527-96 Street - 423-2285
Monday to Friday - 9:30 a.m.
- sandwiches

Friday - 9:45 a.m. - sandwiches

3. Inner City Pastoral Ministry

at The Bissell Centre - 424-7652

Snacks after Sunday Service
- 12:00 to 1:00

4. Christ Church

12116-102 Avenue - 488-1118
Every 3rd Saturday - 5:00 p.m. meal

5. Herb Jamieson Centre

10014 - 105A Avenue - 429-3470

For men not on assistance

Monday to Friday 7:00 to 7:45 a.m. breakfast

12:00 - 12:45 p.m. - lunch

5:00 to 5:45 p.m. - supper

Weekends 11:00 - 11:45 a.m. - breakfast
4:00 - 4:45 p.m. - supper

6. Hope Mission - 422-2018

Daily 7:00 to 7:45 - breakfast

Noon - lunch

5:00 to 6:45 - supper

7. House of Refuge Mission

10339-95 Street

Daily - 8 p.m. - meal

8. Marian Centre

10536-98 Street - 424-3544

Daily except Wednesdays

12:00 to 12:45 p.m. meal

Closed from the 27th of each month to the 1st

8. The Mustard Seed

10635-96 Street - 426-5600

Monday to Friday - 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. supper

Saturday - 5 p.m. - supper

Zero tolerance of alcohol

10. Operation Friendship

9526-106 Avenue - 429-2626

Monday to Friday - 9:00 a.m. - breakfast

Monday to Sunday - 12 noon - lunch

5:00 p.m. - supper

For seniors over 55 only

11. Red Road Healing Centre - 471-3220

Friday - 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. - soup and bannock

12. Salvation Army

9620-101 Avenue - 429-4222

Fridays - 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. - breakfast

13. St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

9606-110 Avenue - 426-1122

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7:00
a.m. Breakfast

14. St. Faith's Anglican Church - parish hall

11725-93 Street - 477-5931

Thursday - 12:00 noon - soup

Saturday - 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. - breakfast

3rd Friday of the month - 7:00 p.m. - supper

15. Emmaus Church

5015- 144 Avenue - 275-1647

Monday - 4:45 to 6:00 p.m. - meal

16. Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre

9611-101A Avenue - 423-5302

Meals for women staying at the shelter.

If not, bag lunch is given

17. Edmonton Orthodox Reformed Church

1161- 95 A Street - 479-1860

Thursdays, 6:25 p.m. soup

18. Robertson Wesley United Church

10209-123 Street 482-1587

Second Saturday of each month

January to November, 5:00 p.m. meal

19. Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre

15210 - Stoney Plain Road - 481-4001

Mondays - 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. - meal

20. One Accord Bible Fellowship Church

10802 - 93 Street - 425-6310

Saturdays, 10:00 to 1:00 p.m. meals

Have you witnessed an act of violence against a homeless person, or been homeless, and a victim of violence?

If so, please fill out the form below and return to Edmonton Street News, 9533-106A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 0S9

Name of person or persons involved (if known) _____

Date _____ Time _____ Where did the incident occur _____

What happened _____



Facing the Challenges of Housing

Created by van Nostrand and Evelyn, street photo

Vendors pay 50 cents per paper

EDMONTON STREET NEWS

Edmonton Street News
Volume 6 Issue 4, 2009

Edmonton Street News is an independent publication produced by volunteers and sold by vendors on the street.

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The deadline for advertisements and submissions for the next issue is April 15 th.

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We practice sound journalism with respect to FOIP legislation and respect for the privacy of the persons portrayed in stories and photographs.

The views presented in this publication are those of the writers.

Facing the challenges of housing first



With the release of the City's ten-year plan to end homelessness, then a ten-year plan by the province, housing first has been a central theme. This simply means that emphasis is placed on getting people into housing, then linking them to necessary supports and services after they are in their own home.

How does it work? On a small scale, housing first has been put into practice by Cassandra van Nostrand, who manages a small rental property near the Coliseum. The three-bedroom house has three tenants, but could house as many as five. The tenants share a common bathroom, living room and kitchen.

One of the tenants moved into the house upon his release from the Fort Saskatchewan Jail. Without a place to move into, he would have been homeless on the streets and dependent on shelters. With no rental history, he would have had a hard time finding a landlord who would accept him. But she allowed him to move in first, then to apply for social assistance, which meant obtaining necessary ID and a doctor's report for medical welfare. The whole process took three weeks, then he was issued a check covering his rent from the day he took up occupancy, which paid his damage deposit as well.

In the meantime, van Nostrand regularly brought over care package of food to the house for him and the two other men who had moved in.

Al and Jack (names have been changed), the other two tenants at the house, met van Nostrand at the Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre. "They were homeless and pushing around a shopping cart with some moldy bread and old clothing in it," she said. "They had been looking out for one another on the street."

After the two men moved into the house, she was able to locate Al's trustee so his rent and damage deposit were paid from his AISH. She also found out that he had been evicted from a group home and several other residences due to violent behaviour when under the influence of alcohol. An alcoholic, he receives a weekly allowance from his trustee that he spends on beer. Although he has a bedroom upstairs he prefers to spend his time sitting on the living room sofa drinking beer, throwing the cans behind the couch and listening to Much Music until he passes out. He seldom makes it to his room.

When he needs food, he goes to the nearest Safeway's store. "I just help myself from the Food Bank bins," he said. "The security lets me take the food."

Jack, the third tenant, had no ID and no money although he claimed to be a truck driver, among other stories. Van Nostrand drove him to Operation Friendship to have ID made, then to a doctor to get a medical report for welfare, then to Alberta Works. He lived in the house for nearly a month before he was finally issued a check.

For that first month, Jack made the living room his home, sleeping on a mattress on the floor, surrounded by smelly piles of

clothing. He has a compulsive obsessive disorder, so he constantly re-arranged everything in the house – the furniture, the pots and pans from one cupboard to another, the cutlery from a drawer to a cupboard to a cup on the counter. One day a desk was on the staircase, blocking it, the next it was on the back porch. When van Nostrand ordered him to vacate the living room and move into his bedroom upstairs, he did, but he removed the bathroom door to make himself a box spring by laying it on top of crates under his mattress. Other things from the main floor started vanishing, too, to be found later upstairs in his room- the VCR, tools, food from the kitchen, etc.

Jack lacked basic lifeskills, cooking up everything he could find in the cupboards at once. The stove was covered in large pots and frying pans filled to the brim with a kind of slop made with rice, macaroni, cans of vegetables, beef patties and whatever else he could throw in.

"Would you like some soup?" he would say to his housemates, as he served himself in a large serving bowl. They usually refused.

Just after his March check came, Jack disappeared. Van Nostrand feared the worst – that he was in jail, or possibly even dead, but three weeks later she got a call from a shelter in Lloyd Minister. Jack had been staying there and they were totally frustrated

by his behaviour, flushing the toilet up to a hundred of times a day, constantly moving things around and even helping himself to other people's things. They wanted to send him back. He is expected to return in time to collect his next check.

Another tenant, Evelyn, also moved into the house, but stayed only one night. At the age of 71, she found herself homeless for a night for the first time in her life when her granddaughter threw her out in -30C degree weather.

"I've worked all my life," she said. "I still do commercial painting. I was a caregiver twelve years. I even have ground school training." She moved to Edmonton because she needs to have an operation, and went to livewith with her granddaughter, who needed help with baby sitting two toddlers, but things didn't work out.

"I started working in the morning, and worked until the next morning," Evelyn said.

Photos Pedro Schultz

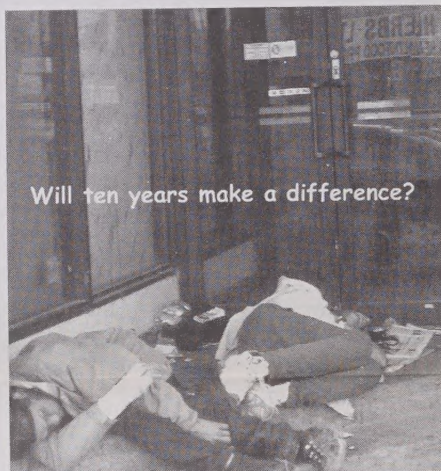
"She didn't want me to leave the house, not even on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve."

Evelyn found herself spending most of her money on the family as well, and then her grand daughter demanded she start to pay rent in addition to her working for free babysitting. When Evelyn refused, her suitcases and other belongings were thrown out in the snow, and she was locked out. She feared going to the Women's Emergency Accommodation Shelter because of the stories of drug use and theft she had heard. Then she met van Nostrand at the senior's drop-in and moved into the house, but she didn't feel safe sharing a house with three men, so van Nostrand moved her into her own home instead. The two now do volunteer work together.

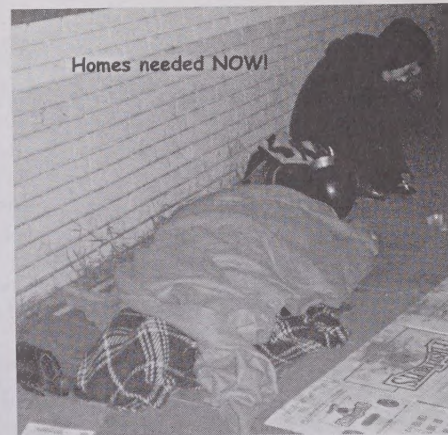
Van Nostrand said, "I've learned that you can't mix men and women in the same house."

By Linda Dumont

Will ten years make a difference?



Homes needed NOW!



The Marian Centre - A Room with A View



It's a new day. Dawn lights up the morning sky. Darkness goes while the moon and stars are hidden under the mantle of the sun's brightness. Suddenly a fast moving object with lights blazes the sky. What is this? Surely not an alien spaceship about to descend on our roof? What a time to come! I haven't even dressed yet. The hum and the roar of jet engines confirms the flying object is only a large passenger plane enroute to the local airport. Marian Centre is on its flight path. I'm sure the pilot and viewing occupants can see the flag on our flat roofed building. Probably they wonder what place is proudly displaying the national emblem. One can actually see the plane's underbelly and wheels as it descends for its landing.

Another light I see. This time it's the chapel. The family is about to start its morning prayers. The excellent acoustics here enhance the human voice, giving it a resonance and melodic tone that would rejoice any choir director's heart. Another aspect of this beautiful, icon chapel is the several large, clear windows. They seem to symbolize the spirit of openness and of a church that includes the poor, so visible outside at times. I suspect that the architect was inspired by Pope John the 23rd when he started the sec-

ond Vatican Council in the late 1950's. It is said that he opened up the windows of change in the church, which affected the whole world and our relationship to it. It still continues.

It is my privilege and assignment to spend an hour in the chapel each day when the noon meal is being served. Before the door is opened I look out on the assembled line of men and women. It's an orderly and peaceful group. Viewing proceedings from the roof is another assembly line, this one of pigeons. Some continue to fly in just in time for the grand opening. Like the five magpies perched on the tree, and the small birds on the ground, they wait their turn. They seem to say "Eat first, friends, but don't forget to throw us a few crumbs on your way out." Some of the men and women actually enjoy sharing their bread with their fine-feathered friends. The courtyard, a garden of beauty in the summer, thanks to Patrick, is an attractive peaceful place. The outside scene delights the eye and prompts me to pray for our poor and their welfare.

At the end of the meal, I see "shopping cart" Richard wheel up the driveway. Leaving his cart parked outside, he quickly goes in, eats his meal, then resumes his daily activity. Our beloved foundress would delight to see this knight of the road. This elderly, slightly lame man is an inspiration. One could say he gathers up the fragments and puts them in his shopping art. He searches for various scraps in our garbage bins and elsewhere. He even hauled away our Christmas tree. I actually saw him from my window performing this silent charitable act. Where he put this, God only knows and He's not telling us. I'm convinced such men render a great service and are a blessing in our house and our city.

Another day I saw a young woman in a

very disheveled state pushing a hospital walker and navigating it downstairs. I was told she's a regular and usually ornery and foul mouthed in her poor state. Such broken people, short of a miracle, are on an early suicide, downward trip to the grave. We know in faith that God will have mercy on these children of His who, for the most part, are victims of sin, neglect and lack of love.

I will conclude by describing a touching scene I saw from my window. A female volunteer, who renders great service in our clothing room, was having a friendly chat outside with an elderly Native couple. On leaving, the man turned back and gave her a big hug. It moved me to witness such a genuine expression of gratitude and love. Incidents such as this give purpose to our presence here. Disguised within the poor, Jesus reveals himself and heals our wounded hearts. Such moments occur that lift our spirits and strengthen us to persevere on our daily pilgrimage through life. Perhaps the late Jim Guinan's cliched expression has meaning here:

"keep pluggin and do the best you can." It's all worth it.

Story and photos by Michael Fagan



Truth or Fiction?

ESN: Mr. Dyck can you tell us a little about yourself?

Roman Dyck: I'm just your typical middle class Edmontonian—the wife and I make about 90 grand between us, got a comfortable little place in the 'burbs, the boy plays soccer, daughter's into figure skating, just got back from a little winter break in Mazatlan....

ESN: We'd like to ask you about the time you spend in the inner city more particularly.

RD: Sure. What can I tell you?

ESN: You have been observed driving around and stopping for women more than once in the area.

RD: Hey, what the hell—I'm just a red-blooded Canadian guy. What's the big deal?

ESN: Do you know that many of the families living in the areas where a lot of prostitution business is carried out are very concerned?

RD: Concerned about what? There's always been hookers hanging out in those parts of town. You get a lot of big trucks in an industrial park, you get joggers if you live along the river valley, you get a few more vehicles cruising around if you choose to live in the slums. It shouldn't be much of a problem—a guy's not speeding if he's looking for a hooker, so the streets should be safe.

ESN: But why do you want to be buying sex in the inner city anyway?

RD: (laughs) What? Do you think you'll find girls like that on the street corner in my neighbourhood? I've got a wife and kids—I don't want them seeing that kind of stuff. No one I know does. It's part of the culture of

the inner city—that's where it belongs.

ESN: Do you think you might be contributing to a serious problem?

RD: That sounds like some social worker talking. Listen, those girls make their own choices. No one tells them they have to be out on the corners dressed in trashy get-ups showing off their bodies. They're in business—just providing a service. And they make good money for it too. Girls from my part of the city grow up to be secretaries and nurses and so on—girls downtown don't have those interests—for them they get into sex early and figure they might as well make a buck from it.

ESN: Could growing up in a neighbourhood where you see prostitution going on every day have any unhealthy influence on young people?

RD: What? Little kids aren't going to notice—it's just people getting in and out of cars for them. And the others—well, some of those kids figure out it's easy money and start into business pretty young anyway. They're looking for money to buy drugs—they're not into morality.

ESN: Roman, would you want your daughter or wife trying to get the attention of some guy driving by, showing her breasts to get them interested?

RD: Hey—I offered to be interviewed of my own free will. Don't start insulting my family. They're not like women down here at all. They've got standards. The kids, er, women, down here are just looking for an easy life—getting paid for a blow job's a lot easier than busting your butt working for a

real living.

ESN: What do you think of a young woman when you pick her up?

RD: Listen, most of them are so out of it on drugs and stuff that you couldn't have any kind of conversation with them—besides a nice conversation's not exactly the point of picking them up. If they were decent normal people they wouldn't be living like that anyway. What kind of mom sells sex to feed her kids? The best thing would just be to sterilize them all.

ESN: Maybe they don't see that they have many other choices.

RD: What do you mean? Most of them are free loading off of welfare anyway—the money from hooking is just gravy for them. But this is getting too heavy for me. I pick up someone down here once in a while—it's just harmless fun—you know, guy's night out, something to do to let off some steam. It doesn't mean anything—don't try to make this into some big criminal horror. Anyway, I gotta get going, or I'll be late home for supper.

By Jim Gurnett

Prairie Sandblast
780 465-7280

Man of Christ Abased

Chapter 9 - Night of Torture

By Lauren Petersen

I have a photo of me taken by my sister on my 24th birthday just four months after my wedding. I look 40 instead of 24, a haggard woman with dark circles around my eyes, dull straggling hair, and a scar above my lip. A photo taken just before my wedding shows a young woman with a smooth, clear complexion, long shining ash blonde hair and a serene countenance.

That birthday celebration was a turning point in my relationship with Gay. Until then, I still harbored thoughts of regaining my freedom, of leaving the whole sick, sordid, abusive situation. But after my birthday, I changed subtly, into something else – a survivor who just lives from day to day, doing each day what has to be done to keep on surviving. Looking back, it's hard to understand even for me. People always ask the question, "Why didn't you just leave?" and I have no answer. I was ashamed, deeply ashamed of the situation I was in. I was thankful that my father hadn't lived to see what had become of me. I also asked myself if somehow I had caused Gay to change so radically. And I continued to hope for change, trying to please him, believing that if only he had everything he wanted he would be content, and I could live my life. And as a Christian, I was bound by the vows I had taken, knowingly, in the faith, before God.

A few weeks before my birthday, Sharon and mom breezed in, carrying a decorated cake, steaks for supper, and gifts for me. While they were there, Gay said little. He had a couple of bottles of wine, and was drinking it while the rest of us had coffee. During the supper, Sharon chattered about the school, and mentioned that Eugene, one of our former suitors, had been out to the farm. We always thought he was just being a good son driving his mother to visit my mother until the day he wrote a love note to Sharon. As we cut the cake, and I opened my gifts, I could feel the tension building in Gay, and I could feel his eyes watching my every move.

Finally, Sharon and mom left and we were alone. Gay sat at the table drinking another glass of wine, saying nothing for a full ten minutes before he turned towards where I was seated on the couch. His face was twisted with anger. "You're having an affair with Eugene," he said.

I was stunned. I had never even dated Eugene, and not even seen him for more than a year. "You know I'm not," I said.

He got up and stood over me, repeating the accusation, then yanked me to my feet by the front of my blouse, ripping it from my

body and tossing it onto the floor in the middle of the room. He then tore off my slacks and underwear and threw them on top of the blouse. He flung me, naked, down onto the sofa, and punched me in the face, saying, "Don't move or try to leave or I'll kill you

Warning: the contents of these stories may be objectionable to some readers. ESN does not promote, sanction, criticize, or condone any of the following author pages. These "The Writers' Pages" are intended to allow new authors their chance for freedom of expression, or first amendment type writing and the ESN does not in any way engage in editorial review or other limitations on their products. ESN makes every attempt to promote entertainment and productive honest writing well within the confines of Human Rights and Freedoms of Canada and the constitutional confines therein. The writers find their own sponsors who pay for the printing of their page or part of a page.

right now."

He grabbed my expensive teal blue winter coat and threw it on top of the other clothes, then set them on fire. The cotton and wool smoldered, filling the room with acrid smoke. He added my birthday gifts to the pile. That done, he picked up the butcher knife and walked over to the stove, turned on the burner, and placed the blade across it. In the semi darkness of the room, lighted only by the light above the stove, the knife blade was heated until it glowed red. He picked up the knife and stood over where I was lying.

"I'm going to torture you until you confess," he said, then brought the knife blade down across my left breast. The flesh sizzled under the hot metal. He lifted the blade, then brought it down again a little lower down. When the blade cooled and darkened, he slashed my legs and my left foot. Blood oozed from my foot and soaked into the sofa cushion.

"If you scream or try to run, I'll kill you right now," he warned. He punched me in the face.

"I can't confess to something I didn't do," I said, but he ignored my protests of innocence. He picked up the bread knife, set it on the stove and turned on the burner, then sat beside me and placed his lighted cigarette on my abdomen. "Move it and I'll kill you," he warned. The cigarette slowly burned its way

into ash, leaving a red welt on my flesh.

After heating the knife and bringing it to my flesh a few more times, Gay stabbed my chest with the knife, but the blade glanced off to the side along my ribs. He placed another cigarette on my thigh. He tried to pour wine into my mouth, but I didn't open it, so the wine spilled down around my neck and into the sofa, soaking into my hair. (I didn't realize at the time, but that wine served a specific purpose – it was his alibi, so he could claim I was drunk. Nothing he ever did was ever random. He covered his tracks well.)

Hour after hour, Gay continued to rehearse the knife, then return to torture me. I knew I was about to die. I couldn't confess to something I hadn't done. If I lied to confess, it would give him a reason to kill me. There was no way out. I prayed silently. "God, let me die with love in my heart even for this one who is about to kill me."

Suddenly, the love of God came down around me in the room so thickly that I could feel it as a vibrant living force. Death no longer seemed frightening – it was such a small step from being with God here to being with God there. I was glad I was dying. I rose, fearless, and limped over to where Gay was sitting waiting for the knife to heat up, leaving a trail of bloody footprints. I felt no pain. I no longer cared to live. I put my arms around him from behind and said, "I love you," for at that moment, there was nothing but love everywhere.

He broke down then, and started crying. He got at towel to wrap around my bleeding foot, brought me clothes to wear and called a cab to take me to the hospital. He acted all concerned.

At the hospital, I was aware of ceilings, a kind faced doctor asking what happened - I dared say nothing, but Gay gave him some explanation about fooling around with a knife, and then there was blackness. I awoke feeling nauseated and in pain, with a cast on my foot, and searing pain from the burns on my chest thigh and abdomen which were covered with ointment. There was a tray of food beside my bed but I couldn't eat. I felt very tired.

Gay came in just then, or maybe he was waiting for me all the time. I don't know. He said, "Get up. You've been discharged. I got you some crutches." I felt sick and shaky, and in severe pain as he shoved me into my clothes and propelled me to the exit where a taxi was waiting. I wondered why they discharged me so soon, without even seeing a doctor but perhaps Gay had talked to the doctor on my behalf.

All For the Love of God – The Adventures of a Street Pastor

Chapter 8 - Depression

By Pedro Schultz

In writing this autobiography, I have chosen to write both something that recently happened and earlier experiences in each issue.
By Pedro Schultz

Please forgive me, readers, that I didn't get my chapter in on time for the last issue. I want to share some things that have happened to me recently.

Fittingly, God got me the book, "Unmasking Male Depression" by Archibald Hart. On Saturday, March 7, I came out of a ten-day depression period in which I withdrew from everyone. I never answered the phone or knocking on the door, or the shouting of my name. I did phone my aunt and sister once, and went outside once to go to a clinic to see a doctor for a badly infected finger. I took the prescribed antibiotics and slowly my finger got better. Otherwise, I went out only one other time to eat a sub. Besides that, I ate quite poorly and had no exercise over those ten days.

I was irresponsible. I didn't do anything for anyone. I didn't go to church. I didn't pray or read the Bible very much.

How did I spend my time? Sleeping 10 to

12 hours per day, watching TV and reading. I didn't care much about others or myself. I knew God was there and loved me despite all this, but wasn't willing to call out to Him for help. I knew of things I had done in the past that helped me get out of depression but usually not until after 10 to 21 days.

While in my depression, my mind was filled with negative thoughts, but my dreams were positive. My computer wasn't even working, so the only way I could get any message out was by listening to my answering machine once a day. I could have had a heart attack or someone could have assaulted me and no one would have found out about it for several days. There could have been a death in the family or someone close to me could have been dying in the hospital, and I wouldn't have known about it.

In the book "Unmasking Male Depression", the author speaks from his own experience as he struggled with depression. He says he felt "the sting of bias, stigma and denial". In the book God combined his experience with three decades of clinical research and practice to bring hope and for other men who suffer.

Near the end of the week I hoped I would be out of my depression period by Sunday because I thought I was to speak at the

Lendrum Mennonite church about how Jesus would act in an inner city setting such as I live it. When I was still feeling depressed Friday, I asked my sister to phone the woman I had made arrangements with to tell her that, just as over a month previously, I had to cancel since I was feeling inadequate because of my depression. When I did manage to get out of my depression period on Saturday, March 7, the day before I thought I was to speak, my sister told me it wasn't until the next week that I was to speak. I felt relieved but would have spoken had I been scheduled for that day.

After that, I was so full of joy, love and peace that it was hard to fall or stay asleep for the next few days. I would wake up and hope it was 8 a.m. but it would be only two or three. Three days in a row, I slept only three hours, the next day five, thereafter six to eight hours. The night before I started writing this, I slept in my mum's condo and even though I had helped clean up before I went to bed, I cleaned for an hour more after 2 a.m. During all those days I felt energetic and happy and accomplished a lot.

Tonight showed me how helpful the role of "street pastor" can be. At 6:10 p.m. I sat down on the stairs of the Herb Jamieson

Continued on page 5

Mama's Chickens

Chapter 9 - Quebec

By Sharon Spencer

Father's ship was being commissioned in Quebec and he was to be gone all summer. We were all very pleased about this turn of events. A summer unencumbered by rules lay before us. But all this happiness was soon to be interrupted.

Looking back, this one phenomenal summer was the last carefree summer of my childhood, a summer where I would perch precariously on the fence between Barbie's and bras.

Suddenly early one morning we were crudely awakened out of deep sleep by Father shouting orders at us before our feet hit the floor, before the sleep was out of our eyes, before our brains were summoned from dreamland to reality. "Pack, pack. You're coming with me," was the directive that assaulted our tender ears. We children clamoured around him asking a million questions while rubbing our sleepy eyes awake. Our father did not believe in gentle wake ups, but believed they should be astonishing surprises of noise and possibly tumbling us out of our beds - after all that was how it was done in the Navy. "Wakey wakey rise and shine!" he would cry out in his deep voice as he lifted and banged our bunk beds up and down. There was no possibility of ignoring him and he would go away so we could drift off again. He just wasn't a man to be ignored.

It seemed Father had missed the gentle comforts of home and, more presumably, mother's cooking and other refinements. He had arrived home that morning unannounced to whisk us away for what he termed a long summer vacation in Quebec. All mother's fears and questions were quickly banished as he explained to her what a great opportunity this was to live in an army bell tent for two and a half months, and cook on a two-burner propane stove for, not only us, but also his buddies, while chasing five kids and a dog around a huge park. Of course, Mama, being who she was, quickly consented to Dad's wishes.

The small ancient car was soon overflowing with camping gear and kids as it drove down the road. In our childish minds all we could think was, "Wouldn't we have something to talk about when the teacher asked us what we did on our summer vacation!" The commotion in the small car was infectious as Father informed us of the great cultural outdoor experience we were about to embark on. At that time it didn't seem important that none of us could speak a single word of French. Why let a simple thing like language get in the way of an adventure.

Very late that evening, we arrived at the campground and sleepily helped erect the old musty bell tent that became our permanent home for the summer. Without much fuss we climbed inside our sleeping bags. That night we needed no rocking chair to lull us into a deep sleep.

Mornings came early when you lived in a tent, and at the first break of dawn we were up and eager to explore our new surroundings. The campground was situated in a quiet little farming village off the beaten track. In fact, the largest thing in the village was the campground itself. The tree-lined dusty roads and the huge cathedral church could have come from a Currier & Ives painting, untouched by time.

Being totally surrounded by another language and culture added to the mystique of

our summer adventure. Waterfalls, new friends and the St Lawrence Seaway became our new actuality that summer. Perfect golden summer days floated on the backs of one another as time stood still as it only can in childhood. Mama soon gave up trying to keep track of us and became content if we turned up for supper and bed. Freedom, like honey dribbled on our lips, was ours from the break of day until bedtime.

Dad was not the only one with this great idea of an extended vacation. Other Navy brats, with their families, were enjoying the lack of adult intervention. In fact, we made up quite a little canvas community. It didn't take long for everyone to get to know each other on an informal basis. There is something about tenting that breaks all cultural barriers and makes instant friends of those who, under normal circumstances, would never consider friendship nor even speak to each other.

Camping involves a kind of unspoken brotherhood of the survivors of the battle of the flies, who mistakenly eat every bug known to mankind, suffer in a state of semi-dampness and mouldiness and are still able to smile. In fact, they pay for this experience and are willing come back every year and repeat it. The constant war with insects, heat, cold rain, and poorly cooked food is somehow seen by some as a vacation. Continual suffering of this kind has a tendency to bond even the most mismatched together. The unspoken motto of the camper is "If I were a caveman, I would be a great one, maybe even a king, and certainly better than you."

Because we had so much in common with the other cave people, we shared meals and just about everything else. Parties became every night occurrences. As the sun began to fade, the air would be electric with laughter and music, and dancing under the stars. The responsibilities towards the children began to fade, also. Nobody seemed to notice if the children were there or not. The adults were caught up in the contagious spirit of celebration. Night after night my father would arrive home with lonely sailors who would enjoy the ambiance and company of family settings and meals. Mild flirtations were quite common and did a lot to boost my frail ego.

That summer was engraved in my memory as perfect, but there must always be one or two flies in the ointment. My mother's vast bone of contention was my father's serious financial miscalculation in his haste to get us to Quebec. He had no money to feed us. Since this was a matter of household and did not fall under his jurisdiction, it would fall to Mama to rectify the situation and find a way to provide for us.

And Mama, being who she was, soon rose to the challenge. She was a woman with a plan, and she always believed in the power of children to do more than they knew they were capable of. Gently she would awake us before dawn and send us out to go through the garbage of others, looking for pop bottles, whose value would provide supper that night. She would watch us shrewdly and silently, calculating that 30 cents would buy a dozen cow-corn, and feed us for another day and all would be well.

Somehow she managed to make a game of it. We were spies on a secret mission and no one could know. And especially no one could see. This would have brought shame at that time. Her plan worked quite well and were never hungry that summer. Also none of

mented or asked questions.

Much good came out about eros or sexual love, philia or brotherly love and agape or the very essence of God's unconditional love with no strings attached. We can love that way only when God lives in our hearts and we trust him to help learn to love with agape love.

After the Bible study and short prayer time the service started and a woman led the singing and gave a testimony about how horribly she had been treated by some relatives and friends.

the other campers knew how desperate she was. To our delight, the facade was maintained. My sister, Michelle, found a metal slug that when inserted in a pop machine would give us pop and return to us, like a boomerang, in the coin return slot. This meant free pop all summer, any time we wished.

Looking back, I know my mother felt the fear and responsibility of hungry, trusting eyes looking upwards at her. She never let her chickens know they were poor, and she always managed to feed us. Maybe that is why we all get such great joy from living well off the things others discard as no longer needed or wanted.

Michelle being the middle child and clearly feeling the need for more attention, overheard Mama speaking of appendicitis. Not long after she began to complain of the ailment. Without hesitation she was rushed to the local hospital and quickly operated on, much to her surprise. After her recovery a nice French family came forward to take her in and she got to spend the rest of her stay in a warm bed with three squares a day.

On the eve of my fourteenth birthday, father went to a Levy, which is a nice name for a drunk, and didn't return. A wicked hurricane hit the campground. I remember how wet and scared we were, protected only by a thin, aging piece of canvas being torn every which way by the wind while trying to do its best to shield us from the angry, tormented elements. But Mama did what needed to be done. Her 110-pound frame protected us with all its strength, pounding tent pegs repeatedly while the storm whipped and tore them out of the soft earth and terrorized her five-foot body. Because I was the oldest I would go outside to try to help but she would order me back into the tent. She still found time that night to comfort and hold us.

We survived the night and awoke to the realization that the tent was still, amazingly, standing over us, and our father was not there. Father had failed to come home. He was not only gone, but had deserted us during a vicious storm. By morning Mama was seriously irritated. This was the vacation from hell, and it was about to end. She went out in search of Father, and first found only our small car with blood all over its misshapen body.

Many hours later she found him half-dead in a French hospital. Knowing Mama's tongue, I can imagine Father would rather have been dead than face Mama's wrath. He had done the unforgivable. He had endangered Mama's chickens and now he was about to pay.

She instructed the doctor to get him ready because he was leaving. At first the doctor refused, but there was something in my mother's eyes that convinced him, without a doubt, that he had better do what she said.

Before any of us realized what was happening, the tent was torn down, kids and clothes packed and we were on a train headed for the Maritimes. In our charge was one fatter, bandaged and broken beyond recognition, who could only drink through a straw. His face was mangled like a prize fighter who had gone too many rounds in a losing fight. He would pay greatly for this escapade, never to be forgiven by my mother, nor ever forgotten. It would live in Mama's heart forever as one more reason to hate and distrust. So grew the tree.

After that I went to the Hope Mission and noticed a young woman standing alone leaning against the wall. She asked for a cigarette, but only broke it while drunkenly expressing that she wanted to commit suicide. Then she said she needed to use the bathroom. They didn't want to let her in because a bunch of others wanted to go in, too. I asked that they call 911 for her instead. Meanwhile she managed to barge in. I waited for a while, prayed for her, and left her in the hands of God and the Hope

Continued on page 6

Depression

Continued from page 4

Centre with about 12 others. After listening to someone's woes, I encouraged the guys there to come to the Bible study. About eight came. We had to set up another table and more chairs before Peter led us in some songs. Peter said this was the largest Bible study they had there. It was an excellent Bible study on love led by Ed. I liked his direct, honest and humorous approach to the Bible and life. Some people listened or com-

Our homelessness dilemma: Make the hard choice, or take the easy way out?



Allan Sheppard

Allan Sheppard is a freelance writer and editor, and a volunteer writer for Edmonton Street News. As a pensioner, he finds himself from time to time on the edge of poverty and homelessness. As a self-appointed community elder, he thinks and worries about the needs of children, youth, parents and others who face lives of poverty and inadequate education in the midst of unprecedented wealth.

So...the province's Secretariat for Action on Homelessness believes it will take \$3.3 billion over ten years to get a handle on homelessness in Alberta.

The secretariat's report—A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 years?—was approved by the government and released by Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Yvonne Fritz on March 16. It aims at eliminating all homelessness. I'm not convinced that can be done, but I believe it might be possible to do everything that can reasonably be done, with the money and in the time suggested in the report.

If, as the recently released report on homelessness in Edmonton suggests, it will take \$1 billion and ten years to deal effectively with homelessness in our city, then an estimate of \$3.3 billion over ten years for the province seems reasonable. And the report's recommendations would seem doable, were it not for our government's stubborn and uncreative reliance on volatile resource and gambling revenues to finance its operations.

The proof of Premier Stelmach and his government's commitment to doing something about homelessness will be in Finance Minister Iris Evans's budget on April 7. I live in hope?and in fear.

Any government would have a challenge selling a budget of \$3.3 billion to end homelessness in the best of times (like the times we thought would last forever, only a year ago, or less). These are not the best of times, at least for our provincial government, which seems shocked and surprised beyond belief at its dramatic fall from massive surplus into deficit.

Premier Stelmach, Minister Fritz, and members of the secretariat and the media are saying the right things. They seem to understand the need and the urgency to act. They seem to understand that doing nothing will cost at least as much—probably more—than doing something. They even seem to understand, some of them, that beyond the economic arguments—which at the most basic level boil down to pay now, or pay more later—there is also a moral and an ethical dimension to homelessness and our need to address it. It's a dimension that involves honest acceptance of our obligations in common humanity toward those who are in distress in our communities and on our streets.

On past performance, I cannot believe Premier Stelmach and his government have the will and the courage to do the right thing on homelessness. They glory in making what they call "hard choices," by which they usually mean not raising taxes and not spending money. That kind of talk makes good political rhetoric but questionable logic. The hardest thing, surely, is to raise taxes and spend the money in hard times on programs that may be necessary and beneficial but do not have broad public support.

Since his first days in the legislature as a member of the fiscally hawkish group of Progressive Conservative backbenchers known as "Deep Six," Ed Stelmach has preached precisely the opposite message: tax less, spend less, and damn the consequences; the government does best that does least. To repeat: I live in hope, but I also live

in fear that this government will make what it will call the hard choice to take the easy way out. It will do nothing. Or next to nothing. And it will blame the economy.

I have no illusions about the difficulty the government faces, both in dealing with homelessness in our province and in selling the taxpayers on the need and benefits of taking effective action on homelessness. There is not much sympathy in the community for homeless people or for doing anything seriously intended to help them. Comments online at the Edmonton Journal's web site (responding to stories about homelessness and municipal and provincial reports about homelessness) show some awareness of the complexity of the problem, but little understanding of or sympathy for the homeless.

The same is true of comments I hear at the gym or on the bus. Edmontonians seem to understand that homeless people are victims of circumstances beyond their control, but that does not stop many of them from blaming the victim anyway.

Homeless people may have been forced into or trapped by homelessness due to circumstances beyond their control (some seem to say), but they shouldn't have allowed themselves to fall into such circumstances in the first place. The argument often seems to come down to this: the rest of us have managed to avoid homelessness and other indignities of life, so being homeless or poor must be the result of one's own decisions or behaviour, just as our good fortune is the result of our hard work and smart choices. Call it karma, in a casual interpretation of Eastern religious thought, or call it reaping what you have sown, following Christian theology.

To believe differently is to accept the possibility that one's own good fortune may not be the result of one's own efforts; it may simply be the result of living in the right place at the right time, of having chosen the right parents, or some other event or events over which one did not have much, if any, control.

A proverbial observation that was common in my youth comes to mind here: "There, but for the grace of God, go I." That expression, which may have originated in the Great Depression of the 1930s (see www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/there-but-for-the-grace-of-god.html), has gone out of favour. Even though I am not a Christian or any other kind of religious practitioner, I believe it is time to revive the concept expressed in the statement and apply it to any relationships that exists between ourselves and the poor and unfortunate among us, whether they live down the street, in a nearby alley, or in far corners of the world.

We can make as many economic and social arguments as we can muster (all of them true and defensible) and make them in the strongest possible ways, but as a com-

munity we will never come to terms with poverty, homelessness, and other injustices in this world unless we and the people who have the power to change things are willing to come to terms with a basic truth that is at least as old as many of the world's religions: I am my brother's keeper. I should also add my sister's, my children's, my parents', my neighbours' keeper, and so on?not in the sense of being responsible for them in all ways at all times but of being there when I am needed. That's not a popular position in a world deeply influenced by the teachings of Ayn Rand and her disciples, but it is one I am not ashamed to hold and confess.

Having said that, I realize that I do not have any answers to the challenges of poverty and homelessness, only a conviction that attitudes must change before anything significant can be done and that I must work in whatever small ways I can to foster that change.

The great English critic and man of the theatre, Kenneth Tynan, wrote more than 50 years ago, "(N)o ideology has yet abolished fear, pain, or sadness. Nor has any work of art. But both are in the business of trying. What other business is there?"

Those words sustain and encourage me. Perhaps they will inspire you.

I hope to present in the next issue of the Edmonton Street News a special section dealing with homelessness in Edmonton in the light of the recent municipal and provincial reports. I invite you to contribute and participate in any way you can.

allansheppard23@yahoo.ca

Umbrellas

By Ernest Ballandine

Umbrellas can keep the rain out of your hair and eyes.

On sunny days, umbrellas can keep out the rays.

They're sometimes carried as a fashion force, it can suffice,

But who cares if you're staying in fashion these days?

There are all sizes to fit our needs with ease.

They can cost quite a few bucks I'm told.

Indeed, they can be used in many ways.

Umbrellas are valuable to many and considered as gold;

For me umbrellas are useless until it rains

And on sunny days I like the sun's rays to warm my face.

Depression

Continued from page 5

Mission. Then, I saw a man in front of the Boyle Street Community Cooperative passing urine. He was very drunk, and staggered towards the George Spady Centre. It was full since 7 p.m. as usual The Detox behind the Hope was also full at this time, so I walked him to the back of the Herb Jamieson Centre where about six others were waiting to be let in at 11 p.m. He could barely stand but a couple of men there assured me they would see he got in. After I had left the man at the back of the Hope, a friend of mine asked me if I could get him a blanket because it was cold where they had to stay on the entrance steps inside the Hope. Two others chimed in asking for blankets, too. I said I would see what I could get for them. They opened the front door when I knocked.

On my way home I saw a bearded middle aged man yelling at cars as they went by. I said, "Hi," and asked if he was ok and if he had shelter for the night. He swore at me saying, "I don't have and don't want a place." He sounded like he might jump in front of a

car or hurt someone. I called 911 and explained the situation and left it for them to deal with. The guy saw me on my cell phone and said, "Don't call the police." Then he walked towards the casino.

As I came to the corner of 105 Avenue and 101 Street, I couldn't believe my eyes. A guy was sitting there with his hat stretched out begging at 11 p.m. It was Clayton, someone I know. He said he just wanted to sit there for the night. Clayton had been in the hospital recently for treatment from a heart attack and said he had chest pains. To get the Hope Mission van to come it is necessary to call 911 so the person can be checked out first in case he needs to go to the hospital. He was obviously drunk, so the ambulance took him away.

It was wonderful to get to bed at last. Yes, sometimes God wants his servants to work overtime, but He sure rewards abundantly even if not usually financially. I had more I wanted to write, but I am tired from a short night and a long day. I am looking forward to a good, restful sleep. Hope you are all doing well, to

By Pedro Schultz

Project International Hope Institute For Human Rights

A registered Non Profit under the Province of Alberta & Charity Law.
Commission for the Investigation of the Criminal Justice System,

The following is the outcome of a complex, exhaustive and lengthy investigation of the criminal justice system with reference only to North America and the system of crime and justice in North America. At the present, comments and personal interviews have been conducted with persons from eastern Canada and western Canada, primarily Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan. There is an emphasis on Canada but comparisons are made with insight into the American justice system as well.

The following has been established:

The negative mode of the United States with its heavy emphasis on incarceration and a penal system that continues to spiral out of control (now the biggest industry in California marking into billions of dollars) shows no stopping, no limitation of the crime already taking place and no effect on citizens who may perpetrate the crimes and especially those with drugs.

There is no deceleration of crime throughout most of the U.S.A. and teaching about crime only shows that there is emphasis on "how not to get caught" and a continuing and growing interest in crime by the population at large.

A monetary card system, which could invoke the positive that always exists in all societies no matter what the outcomes, could engender some hope and some of the positive effect that the current system seems to be abandoning due to gross societal fascination and overwhelming peer influence.

A monetary card system could be instituted the minute that there is a nexus to the province, the federal system or the state. There have been other cards such as Medical Savings Accounts, Energy Savings Accounts, and now there could be Positive Money Savings Accounts: called Reverse Retirement Money Savings Accounts started as early in life as possible, and possibly legislated as to when they would start.

This system would be started with any young person and they would have a numbered card similar to a S.I.N. card that gives them points and credits. For example every year in school, without significant loss of school time, every year spent without jail, every year spent without reformatory, parole or probation etc, would be added to positive credits.

This RRMSA (pronounced "rim-sa") would accumulate credits for every year that a junior or a person post 18 years, and then 21 would get when they would allow themselves to drug checkmate. [a voluntary system that they could register for guaranteed to give them money credits in a down the road type of style). No one can be forced to give drug samples, but if they sign up to give this voluntarily in school or in the work force, they

could earn a number of credits on their cards when they reach a certain age

One age may be the first disbursement age. That would give them credits for more welfare if they needed it, college or university credits for free enrollments, etc, if they needed it, other social benefits tied to their cards and giving them proportionately more the more they were living a positive life-style without jail time, without parole, probation, and reform school, while having completed time in school..

Second age for disbursement could be a new disability.

Third age could be an early retirement, or retirement.

The basis for the RRMSA card and its accumulated monetary input would be based on the fact that crime costs money and the well known majority of crime in all of North America is linked with drugs and the culture of drugs and alcohol.

RRMSA reards individuals who maintain a healthy life style as they are growing up that will not be debilitating to them or cost the public huge amounts of money through the legal system, and all that entails. It emphasizes that they will get money. Money is in fact a well-known motivator of people of all ages all over the world.

If we can keep track of credits on the social security or the retirement system, then we can keep track of these RRMSA credits as well, and very easily. The person just has to get a number.

*The Commission for the Investigation of the Criminal Justice System, Phase I
The Legal System representation Phase II ,
Social Outcomes with Family, Social and or
Penal Interventions Phase III*

Has determined that there is now excessive influence on all growing children by way of the streets, gangs, even the schools, and other co-inhibitory groups of thus allied negative influences outside of the home in general that mitigate many current credible solutions to crime and drugs. There is simply no viable alternative to the negative until we can introduce a credible positive influence that has money and meaning for all people. The only positive drug study that kept young people off drugs is the study of Orange County where Dr. Demos showed an aversion of all their youngsters to drugs through positive peer pressure and large group liaison approach that they had with a reward system.

Families have splintered leaving the youngsters to all of the most negative influences.

The only hope and the only solution is the positive peer pressure approach or the same approach with a built in reward or pay-



PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

ATTAINABLE SINGLES AFFORDABLE HOUSING "AT THE CROSSROADS"

MP Peter Goldring held a meeting in Ottawa of Parliamentarians to examine the proposed Mayfair Village attainable housing project.

"Homeless counts have grown, mostly because 90% of all singles private sector housing has been torn down, and not allowed to be replaced by city planners, let alone increased. Most single people need independent living affordable housing, not social welfare sheltering. We can do much better for less cost for those many in great need," Mr. Goldring says.

Randy Ferguson of developer ProCura showed his private sector plan to create 700 units of attainable affordable (10% less than market average rents) singles and couples housing - bachelor and one-bedroom apartments. ProCura proposes to build and operate attainable housing for less than half the cost of the social non-profit providers, but have been stalled on funding applications by provincial and municipal shelter-centric funders.

"We are at the crossroads," Mr. Goldring states. "We must stop the wasteful plans of creating more and more small, inefficient, non-profit social transitional shelter projects. We can do much more with the private sector at half the cost."

The United States has modeled how to deal with the confusion of social industry vested interest exaggerations of the homelessness issue. They created a national understanding of the issue, defined it as best possible, decided how to most effectively deal with it, and implemented that plan. It is my suggestion that Canada form a comparable agency to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness to begin the process nationally. Such a new agency could really help bring about an end to homelessness confusion that sadly serves to inhibit efforts to help those truly in need.

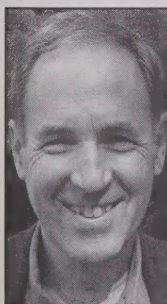
Now, with encouragement from colleagues, Mr. Goldring will approach the provincial and municipal governments to see what is necessary to make singles housing projects such as this a reality.

What do you think?

780-495-3261 www.petergoldring.ca

ment system. Money does work. Something has to be done that is positive. We cannot just build more prisons, as that does not work, as they have proved around the world, nor does punishing people work, as even in Thailand people risk capital pinoshment to do drugs! Our last resort is positive intervention for children and youth.

Submitted by Cassandra van Nostrand, PIHI



Ben Henderson
Councillor, Ward 4

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Sunshine Vendor of the Month Michelle Semple

Michelle says she loves selling Edmonton Street News "because I can talk to people and make money." She began her vending career with Our Voice, but has been selling ESN on and off for about two years. Her favourite selling location is on Whyte Avenue on 104th Street near the Second Cup. She tops up her AISH income with paper sales. Michelle is currently looking for suitable housing, and living at the Hope Mission where she is able to get three meals a day. She said she enjoys doing arts and crafts.



Donna Sabrina Romine beats her tamborine, while singing along to the songs on Shine FM, 105.9. In the past hour she has received 3 quarters and a taco. She is looking cheerful and openly talks about her life. "Sure, print this in the ESN if you like," she says. Donna has enjoyed being part of the inner city since about 1980. She says her teeth were knocked out in an assault, but isn't bitter about it. She is waiting for a pair of dentures. She said she loves God and goes to the Mustard Seed and other Christian Missions.

Edmonton's Annual Good Friday Outdoor Way of the Cross



Public Service Announcement

It would be appreciated if your media organization would provide this information if you have any public service or community announcement service available. Thank you.

The 29th annual Outdoor Way of the Cross will consider the theme of Meeting Christ in the Margins. The walk invites people to think about the people who are most at risk in today's world, by taking part in a prayer walk through the urban core of Edmonton on Good Friday, with music and brief comments at several "stations". The two kilometre walk is reasonable for most ages and abilities.

When: Friday, April 10, 10 AM – Noon

Where: Begins and ends at Boyle Street Community League Hall (9515-104 Avenue)

The Outdoor Way of the Cross is a community event sponsored by the Edmonton and District Council of Churches. Everyone is welcome.

Further information: Linda at 780-466-6327 or Jim at 780-423-9675.



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